

Masthead Logo

**The Iowa Review**

---

Volume 30

Issue 3 *Winter 2000-2001*

Article 40

---

2000

# Small Boys Petting Caterpillar

Laura Kasischke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kasischke, Laura. "Small Boys Petting Caterpillar." *The Iowa Review* 30.3 (2000): 163-164. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.S352>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

## SMALL BOYS PETTING CATERPILLAR

Somewhere, a god  
is handling our hearts.  
Wonder can kill, accidentally, what it loves.

It's summer. The ditches  
are full of fish-scales and glitter. Also  
the sepulcher, the tomb, the pit. Someone  
has scraped them out of the air

with the dull edge of a knife. Someone

has told them to be gentle, and now  
their little hands are light as prayers. If  
they breathe, their hands will float away.  
The music of dust in water.

One of them is trembling. One

is bouncing with his legs crossed.  
Perhaps he needs to pee.

Above us, on the highest limb, a dangerous piece of fruit dangles.  
A teenage girl is stepping

all over the sunshine in her silver shoes. Perhaps

that piece of fruit will simply  
drift into her hands.  
It did, for me. Swiftly,  
but with wings.

And the caterpillar

is a word, a soft bit of star. Oblivious, our hearts. Could  
that word be *faith*, or *trust*, or is it

some other word which means  
*to let go in ignorance, or to hold one's breath and hope?*  
And would that word be *love*?

It doesn't matter because  
we're helpless in the hands of what does.